

Human Rights Council 15th Regular Session, 13 September-1 October 2010 - Item 3

Written Statement presented by the Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII

TITLE: International Solidarity: what kind of solidarity?

International solidarity, according to the Independent Expert on Human Rights and International Solidarity, is defined as “the union of interests or purposes among countries, and social cohesion between them, based upon the dependence of States and other international actors on each other, in order to preserve the order and very survival of international society, and in order to achieve collective goals, which require international cooperation and joint action”.

Art. 28 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights clearly states that “everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.”

Pope Benedict XVI, in the Encyclical “Caritas in Veritate”, at paragraph 67, says prophetically the following: “In the face of the unrelenting growth of global interdependence, there is a strongly felt need, even in the midst of a global recession, for a reform of the United Nations Organization, and likewise of economic institutions and international finance, so that the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth. One also senses the urgent need to find innovative ways of implementing the principle of the responsibility to protect and of giving poorer nations an effective voice in shared decision-making. This seems necessary in order to arrive at a political, juridical and economic order which can increase and give direction to international cooperation for the development of all peoples in solidarity.”

During the discussion on the Right of Peoples to Peace in the 5th session of the Advisory Committee, Miguel D’Escoto Brockmann, the Advisory Committee Rapporteur, said that “Solidarity must replace avarice and egoism in order to prevent the world from continuing to sink in the swamps of suicidal dementia as a consequence of the capitalist culture of greed and maximum gain.”

It is quite clear that the debate on the recognition of the right of international solidarity is paramount for helping the human race to become a human family according to the United Nation Charter.

The Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII fully agrees in recognizing international solidarity as a principle of international human rights law and wishes that such principle may be recognised as a human right and lead the nations in establishing a new international order.

We live in a world that is profoundly unjust, where inequities within and between countries are on the increase, where a minority of rich individuals and rich countries flourishes at the expenses of the majority of the poor and developing countries. The current globalised economic model, based on liberalism, cultivates the poor, needs them intrinsically in order to exist. The so called “profit society” is based on the concept of “homo oeconomicus”. In this society everything and everyone is marketable, the driving forces are “powering, valuing and having” and human beings are valued for what they have and can produce. The poor, the least, the losers are considered as an obstacle. We have to shift, instead, and promote a society based on SOLIDARITY, rooted in social justice, focused on human rights where a human being has value on its own, for being and not for having or producing.

The members of the Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII are committed by sharing directly the life with the poor, to promote the so called “society of “Gratuitousness”, based on being, sharing and relating, where the least, the disabled, the marginalised set the pace of the human family’s march. The fact that 1 billion people suffer from hunger, that 80% of people in the world are without social protection, that there are so many poor in the world, is a clear indicator that as human race we are failing to live as one family.

The establishment of such a society seems a very idealistic goal. Nevertheless, we concur with the Independent Expert when he says that in the multiple crisis situations of today's world, the importance of solidarity rights is phenomenal. The globalisation process, the food crisis, the economic and financial crisis and most of all the climate change threat are great challenges for humanity but also opportunities that can make the leaders of the nations see the establishment of international solidarity as an inescapable necessity so that what should be affirmed as an ideal, can at least be pursued as a common good.

In the debate on International Solidarity, it is necessary to analyse which kind of solidarity we are speaking about. In fact, there are two types of solidarity: the POST-FACTUM and ANTE-FACTUM solidarity.

The SOLIDARITY POST-FACTUM aims to reduce the damage when disasters occur as in the case of natural phenomena and emergencies. The earthquake in Haiti and the recent flood in Pakistan are tragic examples of emergencies that call the international community to intervene in alleviating the suffering of millions of people. This solidarity is good and should be carried out whenever and wherever is needed. Another example of solidarity post-factum however, is the present concept of international cooperation where rich and developed countries "help" the poor and developing ones often attaching conditionalities that are advantaging mostly the donor countries. This last form may be a sophisticated way of maintaining the status quo and covering injustices.

The SOLIDARITY ANTE-FACTUM, which is preferable, aims at tackling the root causes of poverty, revealing the truth in the vision that prevention is better than cure.

Such solidarity implies that States respect fully the international obligations pledged at the United Nations, implement the ratified conventions and treaties, are committed to disarmament, clean energy policies, strengthening health systems, achieving the Millenium Development Goals, etc.

A solidarity ante-factum is interlinked also with other important issues that are under debate at the United Nations and worldwide fora such as: total cancellation of the foreign debt of developing countries, concept of reparation, global and national governance, world trade, reforming of UN system and international financial institutions, civil society participation, intellectual property rights,, agricultural policies, fiscal heavens, climate change, determinants of health, right to development and peace etc.

A solidarity ante-factum could eventually adopt the concept of TWINSHIP between a developed and developing country where a developed country accepts to accompany a developing country (and vice versa) in achieving its right to development without attaching conditionalities but in a relationship of mutual exchange of experiences, gains, human, financial and cultural resources.

The principle of international solidarity has been affirmed in the declaration of the Millennium Summit and is the issue of the Human Rights Commission resolution 2005/55 and Human Rights Council Resolutions 6/3, 7/5, 9/2 and 12/9. The concept has been echoed in several international instruments (e.g. UNGA resolution 55/2). The Vienna declaration (1993), the Paris declaration (2005) the Accra Agenda for Action (2008) and the Monterrey Consensus (2002) are important steps in which States agreed upon issues pertaining to international solidarity and cooperation.

Time has come to progress in the recognition of international solidarity as a human right, overcoming the obstacles created by the discussion on individual/collective rights, third generation rights and so forth, and to focus more on the definition, contents, implications of International Solidarity and on the positive effects that such a recognition can have on the whole humanity.

The Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII participated in the consultation process carried out by the Independent Expert on International Solidarity and Human Rights, Mr. Rudi Muhammad Rizki, by filling the questionnaire sent to all the stake-holders. The Association warmly welcomes the report that Mr. Rizki will deliver

during the 15th regular session of the Human Rights Council and appreciates very much the balance with which all the different contributions are reflected. The report constitutes a further valuable insight on the important topic of international solidarity and human rights.

The Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII wishes to renew its commitment at grass roots level and the international level in building up a better society based on fraternity, reciprocity, social justice, equity, sustainable development that are crucial for living in peace and harmony as human family.